



**Testimony in opposition to SB 832 AAC THE PREVENTION OF THE HABITUATION
OF DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS**

Environment Committee, February 22, 2017

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Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Representative Demicco, other leaders and members of the Environment Committee, I would like to express opposition to SB 832, which as written, would be devastating to the feral cat and stray dog population.

I support the apparent underlying concept of this bill, in that members of the public should absolutely not be feeding wild animals, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Regrettably, this bill does not include provisions for educating the public as last year's HB 5315 did. Educating the public through partnerships with wildlife organizations could potentially result in strong long-term benefits in preventing human vs. wildlife encounters, and ultimately save time, money, and lives. I strongly urge the committee and the DEEP to re-consider ways to incorporate public education into this bill.

The more disturbing aspect of the bill is its inclusion of domestic cats and dogs in the feeding prohibition. Feral cat colonies are a reality that has existed for decades due to irresponsible pet owners. When well-managed by feral cat caretakers, who feed, shelter, and provide veterinary care, these animals can live out their lives peacefully with minimal impact on their adjacent communities. Many dedicated volunteers have devoted their lives and financial savings to caring for these cats, in turn doing a public service in keeping the feral colonies under control. To disrupt this well-established system by prohibiting the feeding of cats and dogs would have dire consequences to both animals and the public.

Connecticut Votes for Animals represents thousands of members in Connecticut, who care about animals, their safety, and their community. I strongly urge you to either oppose, or amend SB 832 according to the comments above.

Thank you,
Amy Harrell